



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

Towards effective conservation and governance of Pontocaspian biodiversity in the Black Sea region

Gogaladze, A.

Citation

Gogaladze, A. (2021, November 30). *Towards effective conservation and governance of Pontocaspian biodiversity in the Black Sea region*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3245837>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3245837>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a famous Brazilian lyricist and novelist Paulo Coelho said “when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it”, it did conspire to help me finish my PhD. Many people have helped me and participated in the journey towards finishing my PhD and I want to thank them all for everything they did for me. Some helped me with scientific parts of it, others with planning and administration, still others helped me, perhaps unconsciously, by inspiring me with their work and passion and incentivizing me to also be as successful, and still others helped me by listening to me sometimes and telling me the much-needed words that ‘everything will be okay’.

My greatest acknowledgements go to my supervisors. I consider myself extremely lucky that I had the opportunity to be guided in this process by three beautiful minds and inspiring people that **Frank Wesseling**, **Niels Raes** and **Koos Biemeijer** are. It almost makes finishing my PhD unfortunate knowing that I cannot keep bothering them with all the problems and difficulties that I encounter. They were and will be the role-models for me and it was my greatest pleasure to learn from them and work with them. We together went through a long and puzzling journey of discovering many novel sides to the Pontocaspian biodiversity conservation in an extremely challenging Pontocaspian environment. Thank you, dear Niels, Koos and Frank for guiding me, being with me and sharing with me the deepest frustrations and greatest joys that the academia can bring. I will forever be grateful.

The PRIDE project was possible because of **Frank Wesseling** and **Caroline van Impelen**. Thank you, dear Frank and Caroline, for granting me a life-changing opportunity to be the part of PRIDE. From the days of the interview in May 2015 up until today it has been a magical experience and I could not even fantasize of a better way of spending those years. Even when I downgrade my stories from PRIDE in order not to hurt someone’s feelings in a conversation by my ‘bragging’, they still seem like plots from the movie and hard to believe by many what used to be an everyday reality for us. It all happened thanks to you, thanks to choices you made, thanks to the experimenting, innovative and open mindsets you have. Thank you for creating such an amazing network of researchers, conservationists, entrepreneurs and students stretching from UK all the way to Kazakhstan. Thank you for extremely diverse skills and knowledge that you gave us through

extensive trainings on so many disciplines from life and earth sciences to future scenario modelling and outreach techniques.

Next, I would like to thank the PRIDE team. It will be hard to explain to someone who has not been involved in PRIDE what it meant to be part of PRIDE and how close the program brought us all together. My fellow PRIDE PhD colleagues: **Sabrina van de Velde**, **Matteo Lattuada**, **Arthur Sands**, **Thomas Hoyle**, **Manuel Sala-Pérez**, **Sergei Lazarev**, **Alberto Martínez-Gáandarra**, **Sri Nandini**, **Lea Rausch**, **Liesbeth Jorissen**, **Sifan Koriche**, **Diksha Bista**, **Anouk D'Hont** and **Justine Vandendorpe**, thank you for all the support, inspiration, adventures and laughs and tears we shared. You made the extremely demanding Network Training Events (NTEs) and fieldworks not only enduring but actually enjoyable. Then, I would like to thank the members from PRIDE partner organizations who helped with making my thesis a success. Thank you **Vitaliy Anistratenko** and **Olga Anistratenko** for welcoming me to Kiev, introducing me to different stakeholders and supporting me throughout the PhD. In Bucharest, I was welcomed by **Marius Stoica**, **Oana Popa**, **Luis Popa** and **Ana-Maria Krapal** to whom I am very grateful. Furthermore, I would like to thank **Ana Bianca Pavel** for her great contributions to my research and for helping me with my fieldworks in Constanta and Tulcea. Last but not least, I would like to thank **Rachel Flecker**, **Salomon Kroonenberg**, **Chris van Baak**, **Arjan de Leeuw** and **Wout Krijgsman** for having the patience to teach me geology from scratch and inspiring me with geology: I really enjoyed our conversations during the fieldworks and NTEs. Listening to them felt like I could travel back in time for millions of years and ‘witness’ how the sediments were forming back then. I would also like to thank **Thomas Neubauer** from whom I learned a lot about taxonomy and who has always been supportive of me and my research.

Additionally, I want to thank all the people that have made my PRIDE fieldworks and secondments possible and successful. I thank the entire WWF in Ukraine Team for hosting my secondment and for their invaluable assistance and support throughout my stay in Ukraine. Special thanks go to **Mikhail Son** from the Institute of Marine biology in Odessa for his great contributions to not only the scientific part of this thesis but to PRIDE project in general. I learned a lot from him and really enjoyed working with him. I acknowledge **Kateryna Kurakina** from Rewilding Europe for her great help with designing PRIDE bags, streakers and logos, which we used for awareness raising events and activities on Pontocaspian biodiversity. Furthermore, I thank **Prof. Ivan Moysiienko**, from Kherson State University, and **Sergei Ovechko**, from NASU Kherson Hydrobiology Station for helping me arrange meetings with stakeholders. I am very grateful to **Ivan Rusel**, **Irina Burlachenko** and the entire professional team of the National Nature Park “Tuzlovskiy many” for hosting me and helping me with the collection of the interview data in Odessa Oblast. I thank **Angelica Curlisca** from the Constanta Dolphinarium, **Mihaela Candea** from Mare Nostrum and **Răzvan Popescu** from the OCEANIC Club for their support and for putting me in contact with relevant stakeholders. I also thank all the interviewed stakeholders for finding time to meet me and for providing honest and thorough answers to the survey questions. Finally, I am very grateful to

Ingrid Visseren-Hamakers from Radboud University Nijmegen, for her guidance and advices on researching the Pontocaspian policy landscape.

I am very grateful to my friends and colleagues from Naturalis Biodiversity Center for all the support, coffee breaks, lunches, birthday cakes and advices. Specifically, I would like to thank **Maarten van 't Zelfde** for teaching me a lot about spatial data and GIS program and for always asking me how I was doing and for always being there for me. Next, I would like to thank **Martina de Freitas Prazeres** and **Thomas Edward Roberts** for their support, encouragement, teaching me how to fly-fish and beautiful fishing experiences and for proofreading my publication. A very special thanks to all the Naturalis PhDs with whom I shared numerous lunches, cups of coffee, tea, drinks and parties: **Esther van der Ent**, **Lisette Mekkes**, **Thomas Swierits**, **Andres Rivera Quiroz**, **Iva Njunjic**, **Sofia Fernandes Gomes**, **Sander Hilgen**, **Jesus Aguirre Gutierrez** and **Tanya Semenova**. Especially, I would like to thank **Esther van der Ent** for her contagious positivity, great support, encouragement and friendship and also for teaching me ice-skating and inline-skating, for inspiring me to start running, for helping me realize that I can actually cycle long distances and for introducing me to the best ice-cream in the Netherlands. Last but not least, my sincere thanks to other Naturalis colleagues who supported me throughout: **Maike van de Kamp-Romijn**, **Nieke Knobben**, **Dominique van der Sterren**, **Johan Mols**, **Willem Renema**, **Yuri Matteman**, **Esmée Winkel**, **Maartje Kijne**, **Fabien Bruine de Bruin**, **Cynthia Crul**, **Ate Cohen**, **Menno Schilthuizen**, **Paula Silva**, **Jan Macher**, **Debbie Wall-Palmer**, **Vincent Merckx** and **Renato Lima**.

Next, I would like to thank my dear paranymphs **Sabrina van de Velde** and **Leon Marshall**. Sabrina, it will be hard to express how grateful I am and how much I appreciate you for always being by my side, for always prioritizing my questions, or my challenges over yours even though I never asked you to, for always checking on me, never forgetting me and encouraging me with words or post cards or silly little presents like relaxing tea bags or a spinning top that said “don't give up! -x- I believe in you”, for formatting my thesis and now for being my paranymph. You are a true friend and I am very happy to have met you. Leon, I am also very grateful to you and I appreciate you a lot and the reason I 'separate' you from Sabrina is because I know you and Sabrina from very different contexts. You are my good friend and I am extremely grateful to you for always being there for me, supporting and encouraging me, answering some of my challenging statistical questions, sharing with me some of the lowest and highest moments and always trying to help me. I am happy you guys will be standing next to me on my defense.

Furthermore, I would like to thank **Vicky Alcalde**, **Guilherme Herrero Bastos**, **Arjan Zwamborn**, **Hans van de Velde** and **Sonja Tierates** for always listening to me and encouraging me. Last but not least, I would like to thank my good friends from outside of Leiden: **Nedim Tuzun**, **Eleftherios Bitzilekis**, **Dea Pochkhidze**, **Maia Tskhvaradze**, **Zizi Chkhaidze**, **Goglo Kurdadze**, **Ramaz Kurdadze** and **Bacho Khachidze** for supporting me in so many ways in the path that led to the PRIDE program and continuing their support throughout PRIDE via the phone and/or video calls or the reunions we had.

Finally, I want to thank my family for all the love and support and for the necessary power that enabled me to keep going no matter what. I would like to thank my parents **Gocha Gogaladze** and **Laura Tsiklauri**, my sister **Lika Gogaladze**, my grandmother **Elene Khutsiashvili**, my aunts **Khatuna Gogaladze** and **Ketino Gogaladze** and my cousins, **Irakli, Giorgi, Tamuna, Elene, Andro** and **Lazare**:

ძვირფასო დედა, მადლობა ყველაფრისთვის, მადლობა რომ მასწავლე ადამიანების სიყვარული, მადლობა რომ მომეცი დაფასების უნარი იმისი რაც მაქვს, მადლობა დაულალავი თანადგომისთვის, აუღწერელი სიყვარულისთვის და გამხნეებისთვის. ძვირფასო მამა, მადლობა ყველაფრისთვის, მადლობა ხელშეწყობისთვის რომ ჩემი ოცნებები რეალობა გამხდარიყო, მუდმივად გვერდში დგომისთვის, პოზიტივისთვისა და სიყვარულისთვის. ძვირფასო დაიკო მადლობა უღრმესი სიყვარულის, თანადგომისა და მუდმივი გამხნეებისთვის. ძვირფასო ელიკო ბაბო, დიდი მადლობა ყველაფრისთვის, უდიდესი სიყვარულის, დაულალავი შრომისა და ულამაზესი ზავმშობისთვის. ძვირფასო მამიდებო და მამიდაშვილებო, მადლობა უდიდესი მხარდაჭერისთვის, დახმარებისთვის გადამედგა ის ნაბიჯები რომლებმაც დღევანდელ დღემდე მომიყვანა და დახმარებისთვის მუდმივი მზადყოფნისა და სურვილისთვის.

